

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-09

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TO AMEMBASSY KABUL

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AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 043769

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS:PFOR, AF, PK

SUBJECT: AJMAL KHATTAK AND "PUSHTUN LIBERATION FRONT"

REF: (A) KABUL 1088; (B) KABUL 1089 (NOTAL)

1. APPRECIATE EMBASSY'S REPORT OF AJMAL KHATTAK'S CALL. IN RESPONSE TO REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (REFTEL A) ON PUSHTUNISTAN, NEA/PAB FILES REVEAL THAT DURING PAST TEN YEARS GOA HAS STEADFASTLY REFUSED TO SUPPORT PUSHTUN LIBERATION MOVEMENTS OR CONCEPT OF PUSHTUNISTAN GOVERNMENT IN EXILE.

2. SEVERAL OPPORTUNITIES AROSE IN THE 1960S AND EARLY 70S TO DO SO. DURING HIS EXILE IN AFGHANISTAN, KHAN ABDUL GHAFFAR KHAN REPEATEDLY REQUESTED GOA SUPPORT TO FORM A PUSHTUNISTAN GOVERNMENT IN EXILE. IN ADDITION, HE ASKED FOR FUNDS TO START HIS OWN RADIO STATION AND NEWSPAPER.

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THE GOA FIRMLY REJECTED THESE REQUESTS. AS THE PUSHTUNI-

STAN ISSUE BEGAN TO FADE SOMEWHAT IN THE LATE 1960S AND EARLY SEVENTIES (EXCEPT FOR THE RHETORIC), THE AGING GHAFFAR KHAN, SEEING HIS DREAM OF AN AUTONOMOUS PUSHTUN STATE EVAPORATING, DECIDED IN LATE 1972 TO RETURN TO PAKISTAN, LEAVING HIS SON WALI KHAN TO CARRY ON THE FIGHT FOR PROVINCIAL AUTONOMY WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE NAP-LED OPPOSITION TO BHUTTO.

3. THE ONLY OTHER SIGNIFICANT SEPARATIST MOVEMENT IN RECENT YEARS AROSE IN 1970-71 UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF NIAZ ALI, NEPHEW OF THE LATE FAQIR OF IPI (BETE NOIR OF BRITISH IN 1930S AND SUPPORTER OF PUSHTUNISTAN AT TIME OF PARTITION) AND KHALIFA ABDUL LATIF. AN ORGANIZATION KNOWN AS THE AZAD PUSHTUN UNION (APU) WAS FORMED IN THE WAZIRISTAN TRIBAL AREA OF PAKISTAN AT GURWEKH IN APRIL 1971. ABDUL LATIF MADE SEVERAL VISITS TO KABUL DURING THIS PERIOD ASKING FOR GOA SUPPORT, BUT EACH TIME HIS REQUESTS WERE PUT OFF OR DENIED. THE APU THEN TURNED TO AND RECEIVED SOME FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM INDIA. DURING THE GROWING INDO-PAK CRISIS OF 1971 THIS MOVEMENT FOMENTED OUTBREAKS OF TRIBAL VIOLENCE WHICH THE GOP WAS ABLE TO CONTAIN. SOME OF THE LEADERS OF THE APU WERE ARRESTED IN 1972-73, AND THE MOVEMENT, IF IT STILL EXISTS, HAS NOT BEEN HEARD FROM RECENTLY.

4. INTELLIGENCE REPORTING ON THE ABOVE DEVELOPMENTS SUGGESTED THAT THE GOA REFUSED TO SUPPORT PUSHTUN AUTONOMY MOVEMENTS OUT OF FEAR THAT THE LEADERSHIP AND CONTROL OF THE PUSHTUNISTAN ISSUE WOULD BE USURPED BY OTHERS, INCLUDING WALI KHAN AND THE NAP. INDEED, IF ONE EXAMINES THE HISTORY OF GOA SUPPORT FOR WALI, IT IS APPARENT THAT THE DEGREE OF AFGHAN SUPPORT WAS IN INVERSE RELATION TO WALI'S STRENGTH IN THE FRONTIER. THIS IS A PHENOMENON OF WHICH THE GOP LEADERSHIP AND BHUTTO HIMSELF WERE FULLY AWARE, AS INDICATED BY INTELLIGENCE REPORTING AS RECENTLY AS 1974.

5. GOA SUPPORT OF THE PUSHTUNISTAN CONCEPT--AND THIS APPEARS TO HOLD TRUE ALSO SINCE THE ADVENT OF DAOUD--HAS ALWAYS BEEN AMBIVALENT: SINCE AFGHAN NATIONALISM IS CONFIDENTIAL

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BASED ON PUSHTUN NATIONALISM AND PUSHTUN HEGEMONY OVER THE OTHER ETHNIC GROUPS WITHIN AFGHANISTAN, THE IDEA OF PUSHTUNISTAN MUST BE KEPT ALIVE; BY THE SAME TOKEN, THE GOA DOES NOT WANT A COALESCENCE OF PUSHTUN NATIONALISM AROUND GROUPS OUTSIDE ITS CONTROL (ESPECIALLY WITHIN PAKISTAN), SINCE THIS MIGHT BE A MAGNET FOR AFGHAN PUSH-TUNS AND SERVE TO UNDERMINE GOA AUTHORITY. ANOTHER FACTOR PROBABLY INHIBITING OVERT AFGHAN SUPPORT FOR FREE

PUSHTUN MOVEMENTS IS THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THIS WOULD TRIGGER A STRONG GOP RIPOSTE, LEADING TO A SITUATION THAT MIGHT GET OUT OF CONTROL. INSTEAD OF ACTIVE SUPPORT FOR SEPARATIST ACTIVITIES, THEREFORE, THE GOA HAS USUALLY TURNED UP ITS PUSHTUNISTAN PROPAGANDA OPERATION TO AVOID DOMESTIC CRITICISM OF ITS SOFTNESS ON THE ISSUE.

6. GIVEN FOREGOING, WE WONDER WHETHER GOA WOULD BE WILLING TO LEND ACTIVE SUPPORT FOR A PUSHTUN LIBERATION MOVEMENT WHICH IT COULD NOT CONTROL. WE, OF COURSE, WOULD APPRECIATE LEARNING MORE ABOUT AJMAL KHATTAK'S ACTIVITIES IN AFGHANISTAN AND HOW WELL COORDINATED HIS MOVES ARE WITH THE GOA. WE WOULD NOT RPT NOT RULE OUT GOA TACIT APPROVAL OR QUIET SUPPORT OF KHATTAK-LED SUBVERSION IN NWFP. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT, GIVEN THE GOP CRACKDOWN IN NWFP, AFGHAN DOMESTIC POLITICAL CONSIDERATION COULD PUSH DAOUD TO CONSIDER SOME KIND OF MORE ACTIVIST POSTURE.

7. WE AGREE THAT IT WOULD B USEFUL AT AN APPROPRIATE TIME TO WARN GOA ABOUT LIKELY ADVERSE REACTION IN PAKISTAN TO AFGHAN SUPPORT OF ANY PUSHTUN LIBERATION MOVEMENT LED BY EXILED PAKISTANIS (REFTEL B). SEPTTEL CONTAINS GUIDANCE ON FUTURE CONTACT WITH AJMAL KHATTAK. KISSINGER

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